

detail, and two photogravures are given; mention is also made of two more hybrids which were sent alive to Dr. Vilaró.

51. *Wright and Coues on North-American Birds.*

[Citizen Bird: Scenes from Bird-life in plain English for Beginners. By Mabel Osgood Wright and Elliott Coues. With one hundred and eleven illustrations by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. 8vo. New York & London, 1897.]

Dr. Roy Hunter, the chief personage in this book, is a modern Mr. Barlow, who leads his Sandford, Merton, & Co. into the wilderness of the Eastern States and discourses to them of the common birds to be found therein. After convenient pauses for taking breath, the children play the well-known part of the ancient chorus and start the Doctor off again, with questions or remarks which are either preternaturally shrewd or simply idiotic. But beneath this unnecessarily irritating introductory matter there is a fund of admirable and accurate information, while many of the illustrations are beautiful.

XXVII.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed “to the Editors of ‘The Ibis’”:

SIR,—All Ducks, Geese, and Swans, so far as I know, moult all their flight-feathers at once, so that they are for a time unable to fly. But the Semipalmated Goose of Australia (*Anseranas melanoleuca*), of which I have kept specimens in confinement for several years, does not share in the peculiar moult of the Anatidæ.

My birds, which are under constant observation, drop their flight-feathers gradually, so that they never lose their power of flight. They are also very arboreal in their habits. A pair which I keep in a tolerably large aviary can constantly be seen flying from perch to perch, and spend the nights and the greater part of the day, when not feeding, on perches. They are extremely fond of mud, and may be seen wading

through it knee-deep, searching in it diligently with their bills, much as Waders do. They have a strong musk-like smell, which they chiefly emit when flying, and which remains in the air for a while, so that, if one crosses the space through which they have been flying, the smell is distinctly noticeable.

*Anseranas* is, no doubt, a very aberrant form of the Anatidæ.

I am,  
Yours, &c.,

Gooilust, s'Graveland, Noord Holland,  
November, 1897.

F. E. BLAAUW.

SIRS,—I am experimenting in breeding wild species of Pigeons. The wild Rock-Dove I have thus far failed to get, and I understand that they are obtained with difficulty, if at all. Can you tell me what the chances are? For any assistance or advice I shall be very greatly obliged.

You may be interested to know that I have a flock of 20 Passenger-Pigeons (*Ectopistes*), and have raised five young ones this season. I have six hybrids between a male *Ectopistes* and a female *Turtur risorius*. I am now getting some very fine hybrids between the Common Dove-house Pigeon and the Japanese Turtle-Dove.

Yours, &c.,

The University of Chicago,  
December 13th, 1897.

C. O. WHITMAN.

SIRS,—Having so recently ('Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,' vol. lxvi. pt. ii. 1897, p. 523) pointed out, and in part illustrated, certain differences between a Manipur specimen of *Phasianus* (or *Calophasis*) *humia* and a Burmese bird referred by Mr. W. L. Sclater (*Ibis*, 1891, p. 152) and myself to that species, I was much interested in seeing in 'The Ibis' (January, 1898, p. 124) Mr. E. W. Oates's assignation of specific rank to Burmese specimens of this form of Pheasant, which he also had previously considered identical with Mr. Hume's bird.

On re-examining the two birds alluded to in my paper quoted above, I find that there is every reason to consider this earlier identification of the Burmese birds as correct; for of all the points of difference enumerated in tabular form by Mr. Oates in 'The Ibis,' none but the first hold good when applied to these specimens. And as our Burmese bird shows apparently broader edgings of white to the rump and back-feathers than do the specimens examined by Mr. Oates, this point also would appear to be variable; indeed, when looking over the series of this form of Pheasant in the British Museum during my visit to England last year, I came to the conclusion that the variation in this point was sufficient to justify me in having refrained from giving specific rank to the Burmese specimen in the Indian Museum.

Other differences which I pointed out between our Manipur *P. humia* and this specimen are not noticed by Mr. Oates, so that I presume he found them not borne out by the British Museum series; and therefore, in view of all this variation in so few examples of this Pheasant as appear to have been examined by naturalists, I think that the claims of *Calophasis burmannicus* to rank as a species must be regarded as "not proven."

Yours, &c.,

FRANK FINN.

Indian Museum, Calcutta,  
February 10th, 1898.

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SIRS,—In Mr. W. Eagle Clarke's paper on birds from the island of Negros, in the last number of 'The Ibis' (p. 120), he speaks of *Hypothymis azurea* (Bodd.) in the following terms:—"A male of the Black-naped Flycatcher without the black crescentic bar across the fore neck, and agreeing with *H. ceylonensis* Holdsworth: a species which Mr. Oates (Birds Brit. India, ii. pp. 49, 50) does not uphold, by reason of the black bar not being a constant character." Perhaps it may save trouble to some interested in the species if I say that I do not recognize *H. ceylonensis* as any child of mine. On reference to Legge's 'Birds of Ceylon,' p. 408, I find it

stated that "Mr. Sharpe has separated the Ceylon Azure Flycatcher from its Indian relative (*H. azurea*) on account of the absence of the black throat-bar and its much smaller nape-patch." The species found in Ceylon was given in my Catalogue (P. Z. S. 1872) under the old name of *Myiagra azurea* (Bodd.).

Yours, &c.,

E. W. H. HOLDSWORTH.

Dartmouth,

February 11th, 1898.

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SIRS,—The little Sparrow-Hawk which, in Bulletin B.O.C. no. l. p. xxvii, receives the name of *Astur (Scelopspizias) butleri* (G.), if it was to be differentiated from *A. poliopsis* (Hume), ought certainly, as I now fully admit, to have been described and named by Mr. Rothschild and Mr. Ernst Hartert. Until January 26th I had no idea that I was trespassing on the preserves of the Tring Museum, and that the principal part of Mr. Butler's Nicobar collection was, in fact, Mr. Rothschild's property. I wish to apologize to these gentlemen for an inadvertence which I regret, the more so as I understand they would willingly have bestowed the same name upon the Hawk in question if satisfied of its distinctness. I am also much indebted to them, inasmuch as Mr. Rothschild has generously ceded two specimens of this valuable bird to the Norwich Museum, where it will be duly honoured in the Raptorial collection.

Yours, &c.,

J. H. GURNEY.

Keswick Hall, Norwich,

February 7th, 1898.

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SIRS,—Padre Ernesto Schmitz, of Madeira, has recently drawn my attention to the name *Thalassidroma castro*, given by Harcourt in 1851 to the small square-tailed Petrel generally known as *Oceanodroma cryptoleucura* (Ridgway).

Harcourt's description, which is sufficiently full and clear, can apply only to the above species.

The name *T. castro* has been hitherto overlooked; but, on

calling Mr. Salvin's attention to the matter, he at once agreed that this name must be used for the species, which should in future be known as *Oceanodroma castro* (Harcourt). The synonymy should therefore stand as follows:—

*Thalassidroma castro* Harcourt, 'A Sketch of Madeira,' p. 123 and p. 166 (1851); id. Ann. Mag. N. H. (2) xv. p. 436 (1855) [Desertas Islands, near Madeira].

*Cymochorea cryptoleucura* Ridgway, Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. iv. p. 337 (1882).

*Oceanodroma cryptoleucura* Grant, Ibis, 1896, p. 53 (Salvage Islands; Porto Santo); Salvin, Cat. B. Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 350 (1896).

Yours, &c.,

Nat. Hist. Museum, S.W.,  
14th March, 1898.

W. R. OGILVIE GRANT.

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*The Nocturnal Migration of Birds.*—It is to be desired that some of our British ornithologists should take up in this country the system of observing the nocturnal migration of birds that has for some years been so successfully followed in America. The mode of doing this, and the general results that have been yet obtained, have lately been described by Mr. Frank M. Chapman in a letter published in 'Science',\* to which we wish to call the special attention of those interested in the subject. If, during the migratory period, a comparatively low-power glass be focussed on the full moon, it is probable that a stream of migrants will be seen passing through the narrow angle subtended by the moon's limb. Thus, as has been described in 'The Auk' (vol. v. p. 37), at Tenafly, New Jersey, on the night of Sept. 3rd, 1887, Messrs. F. M. Chapman and J. Tatlock, Jr., using a 6½-inch equatorial, saw no less than 262 birds cross the moon's disk between the hours of eight and eleven. The vast majority of them were, of course, unrecognizable; but in some few cases the peculiarities of these nocturnal wanderers were so marked and so plainly shown that the observers thought themselves able to identify them.

\* "Meteor or Bird?" By Frank M. Chapman 'Science,' n. s. vol. iv. no. 88, Sept. 4th, 1897.